

RIP VAN WINKLE

By WASHINGTON IRVING



Louise F. Dunlap

ENGLISH CLASSICS
IN GREGG SHORTHAND

RIP VAN WINKLE

By

WASHINGTON IRVING

REVISED

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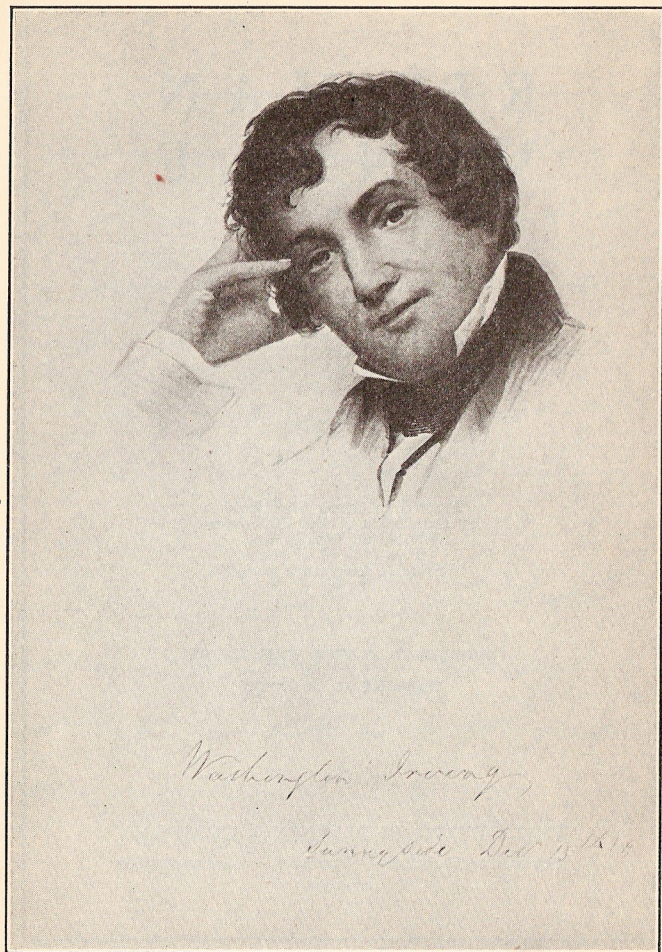
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WASHINGTON IRVING

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An Introduction by WILLIAM J. PELO

WASHINGTON IRVING was born in New York City, April 3, 1783, the youngest of eleven children. On his father's side he was of Scotch descent, the founder of the family, William De Irwyn, having been armor-bearer of Robert the Bruce. He was named after the Father of his Country, who, when he came to New York as the first President of the Republic, is said to have given the young boy his blessing. As a boy Irving was vivacious and given to innocent mischief which often caused his mother much anxiety.

Irving's education was received from various private tutors and his school career closed when he was sixteen years of age. At that time he entered the law-office of Josiah Hoffman, whose family had much influence on Irving's future career. While in the law-office he spent much of his time in reading literature, such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Sinbad*, and books of voyages and travel.

Irving's health was always delicate and had much to do with his abandonment of the law and his devotion to travel. In 1798 he made his first visit to Sleepy Hollow, a region which afterwards was to become the enchanted scene of many of his writings. In 1804 he made his first trip to Europe, where he spent two years in travel in the company of English celebrities.

His first literary publication was a series of letters in his brother's paper, *The Morning Chronicle*. They consisted largely of Satires on the current drama and seemed to foreshadow his innate humor, simplicity, and tenderness of nature.

Upon his return to America with his brother William and John Paulding, he founded the magazine *Salmagundi*, modeled after the English *Spectator*. This magazine lasted through twenty numbers, when Irving gave up the literary ventures and became interested in local politics. In 1809 he published the *Knickerbocker History of New York*, which immediately became popular as a masterpiece of humor. Its publication followed a very clever stroke of advertising. [One Diedrich Knickerbocker was said to have disappeared leaving an unpaid board bill. Among his effects was found a manuscript entitled, *A History of New York*. The advertisement gave him a new description of Knickerbocker and ended with the statement that his manuscript would be published unless he returned within a stated time.]

After the publication of his History, Irving continued to use the pen name, as we find this statement attached to *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*: "Found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker." Irving also wrote under the name of *Jonathan Oldstyle*, and *Goeffrey Crayon*.

Irving's travels abroad and in this country, his diplo-

matic career in Spain, and his acquaintance with the literary circles of Europe and America, gave him a fitting background of preparation for the literary work that placed him among the first American men of letters. His writings are marked by rich humor and sentiment. Temperamentally he was gay, but his life also shows the influence of a spirit of melancholy. He wrote to amuse, to entertain. He preferred the praise of many readers to that of the critic. It is a wonderful achievement for a man with so defective an education to rise to the first place among men of letters. Irving seems to have been born with a rare sense of literary appreciation. He must have studied with care the literature that he read, for his writings show the influence of the style of the best writers of his time.

His writings are quite free from the unrest of the times in which he lived. He was always optimistic and strove to please the public. It has been said that to the last he basked in the sun and radiated cheerfulness all about him. His writings lead one to reflect; to dream; they amuse and entertain, and are an antidote to the feverish excitement of present day life. He brings to his readers the bright influence of nature and turns everything into gentleness and purity.

Irving has been called the Addison of American literature. In *The Sketch Book*, he shows the influence of Addison's writings, but at the same time he preserves his own individuality and shows a literary charm distinctly

his own. Fond of the country, he wrote with sympathy on rural subjects. Romantic in temperament, Irving allowed this trait to permeate his work in a quaint and mysterious way. He often resorted to satire; his works abound in playful jest, but always of an amiable type. His style is clear and remarkably pure and shows unusual delicacies of his moral sense. He never resorted to coarse and vulgar phraseology.

Reading English Classics in shorthand cannot fail to fix facts in the student's mind as no other form of recitation can do. Furthermore, the reading of shorthand will prove a valuable aid in acquiring a vocabulary which the student will find of inestimable value in his later work. This book is designed to fill the purposes as stated. Interest, appreciation of good literature, an enlarged vocabulary, and the ability to use shorthand are the results obtained by the correlation of literature with shorthand.

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